



CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Portantino called the **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council of the City of La Cañada Flintridge to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present: Stephen A. Del Guercio, Laura Olhasso, David A. Spence, Mayor Pro Tem Gregory C. Brown, and Mayor Anthony J. Portantino

Staff members present: City Manager Alexander, City Attorney Steres, Director of Public Works Castellanos, Director of Community Development Stanley, City Treasurer Voss, Public Safety Coordinator Stegner, Management Analyst Wilson, and City Clerk Sessman

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Girl Scout Lynn Gilmore and Girl Scouts from Troop 561.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Julie Battallia, a resident of La Cañada Flintridge, stated that she understood that the City is waiting to hear from the State regarding funding of the La Cañada Boulevard Sidewalk project, but suggested that the City Council authorize the planning and design of this project in order to get this project moving.

Sharon Otsuka, PTA President, spoke of the importance of getting the La Cañada Boulevard Sidewalk project started and urged the City Council to plan and authorize funds to begin the La Cañada Boulevard Sidewalk project.

In response to a question from the City Council, Director Castellanos explained that any planning or design of the La Cañada Boulevard Sidewalk project prior to approval could jeopardize the project's funding.

For the benefit of the audience, Councilmember Olhasso stated that the City Council has requested that the La Cañada Boulevard Sidewalk Project be discussed during the Mid-Year Budget Review, which is being held Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in the City Council Chambers.

PRESENTATIONS

A proclamation designating March 26, 2006 – April 1, 2006 as "Protect your Pets Awareness Week" in the City of La Cañada Flintridge was presented to Girl Scout Troop 561.

A proclamation and plaque were presented to Building Inspector Lucki Benson for her years of dedicated service to the City and community of La Cañada Flintridge.

La Cañada Flintridge Girl Scouts and Silver Project Candidates Caroline Rich and Julia Row were present to collect Care Package boxes, along with personal letters of appreciation, for our soldiers overseas.

Girl Scout and Silver Project Candidates Rich and Row provided a brief description of their Operation Care Packages and collected the boxes for the project.

Councilmembers and the City Manager presented their boxes.

The Public Safety Update for the Fire Department was presented by Chief Gil. Chief Gil introduced Battalion Chief Joe Lindamin.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by City Treasurer Don Voss.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro Tem Brown requested the following correction to agenda item #6, Page 1 - Second Paragraph be corrected to read, "Total visitors are comprised of events on site, walk-in visitors and organized group tours. The memo indicates that total attendance demonstrated a general increase over recent years. This past year's total attendance is still above the prior three year average of 1,738 and slightly more than the prior year's attendance. Walk-in traffic was up from the prior year. This is also a decrease from the average 426 visits of the previous three years. Visitation by tour groups was down this past year."

In response to an inquiry by Mayor Pro Tem Brown on agenda item #8 regarding the Oak Grove Bridge Project, City Attorney Steres explained that the City would be responsible for overruns, but stated that the City's control is that, after Los Angeles County Department of Public Works does the design specification, the City will have estimated costs. He further explained that once design specifications are received, the City will go through the bid process and receive hard costs to work with. The areas where the City will not have control are with change orders, or unforeseen issues that occur when retrofitting an existing bridge.

Director Castellanos explained that the City will be involved in reviewing every change order. He further explained that the City would will only incur 13% of any change orders that may occur; the City of Pasadena would cover the remaining charges.

Councilmember Del Guercio recused himself from agenda items #8 and #9, due to a potential conflict of interest, because his law firm performs legal work for the County of Los Angeles.

Motion by Councilmember Spence, seconded by Councilmember Olhasso, to approve the following Consent Calendar items:

1. Approval of Minutes of the City Council:
 - (a) March 6, 2006 Special Meeting
2. Approval of Warrant Resolution No. 06-05 dated March 20, 2006, for \$1,148,631.35.
3. Receive and file Commission Meeting Agendas:
 - (a) Design Commission Action Agenda from the March 2, 2006 Meeting.
 - (b) Parks and Recreation Commission Agenda from the March 8, 2006 Meeting.
 - (c) Planning Commission Action Agenda from the March 14, 2006 Meeting.
 - (d) Youth Council Agenda from the March 17, 2006 Meeting.
 - (e) Public Works and Traffic Commission Action Agenda from the March 15, 2006 Meeting.

4. Receive and file Monthly Report of Investments for the period ending February 28, 2006.
5. Reject the claim for damages filed by Michael and Mary Fanara Greenberg and direct staff to send the appropriate notice of rejection to claimant.
6. Receive and file 2005-06 Annual Report for Lanterman House Museum as required by Conditional Use Permit (CUP 75)
7. Approval and Acceptance of work performed by Ranco Corporation for the Improvement of Baptiste Way from Hampton Road to Crown Avenue; authorization for staff to file the Notice of Completion; and approval of a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$63,775.
8. Authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement and approve a payment in the amount of \$35,000 (estimate) as the City's share of a joint-project for seismic retrofit of the Oak Grove Drive Bridge over the Flint Canyon Wash.
9. Approve the General Services Agreement with the County of Los Angeles and authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement.

ORDINANCE

10. Introduction and first reading of an Ordinance adding Chapter 4.64 of the La Cañada Flintridge Municipal Code Pertaining to Trails

The staff report was presented by Management Analyst Ann Wilson.

Trails Council President Mary Barrie made comments regarding the illegal drains on the trails, the fence regulations, and also wanted to thank everyone.

Mayor Portantino **OPENED** the public hearing. There was no one wishing to speak, therefore, Mayor Portantino declared the public hearing **CLOSED**.

Councilmember Spence inquired why the word "wood" was included in Section C-7, which reads, ".....no fence shall be covered with fabric, wood, plastic sheeting unless....." City Manager Alexander explained that it was meant to read, "wood or plastic sheeting." Councilmember Del Guercio requested that this change be made to the ordinance. There were no objections.

City Manager Alexander suggested the following corrections be made: Page 5 of Ordinance be corrected to read "Section 4.64.040 Penalty;" and under section 4.64.040 Penalty - A-6 should be corrected to read, "Violation of Section 4.64.030 (A) and/or (B), subsection 12, shall constitute an infraction if the sign or placard is temporary and made of paper or cardboard." There were no objections by the City Council.

A motion was made by Councilmember Del Guercio, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Brown, to direct the City Attorney to read the ordinance by title only and introduce by roll call vote **Ordinance 355** entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE ADDING CHAPTER 4.64 TO THE LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE MUNICIPAL CODE PERTAINING TO TRAILS," with the requested modifications. The motion carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: Del Guercio, Olhasso, Spence, Brown and Portantino; NOES: None; ABSENT: None; ABSTAIN: None; Motion carried 5-0 on a roll call vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

11. Consideration of Hiring a Sacramento Legislative Advocate

The staff report was presented by City Manager Alexander and then turned over to the subcommittee.

Councilmember Del Guercio and Councilmember Olhasso provided a brief overview of their recent trip to Sacramento to hire a Legislative Advocate to represent the interests of La Cañada Flintridge.

Councilmember Del Guercio stated that five lobbyist firms in Sacramento were interviewed: Joe A. Gonsalves & Son, Governmental Advocates; The Wilson Group; Maddox Governmental Relations, and Sloat Higgins Jensen. He stated that it was his opinion that Anthony Gonsalves from Joe A. Gonsalves & Son was one of the strongest firms, but explained that this firm is significantly constrained due to their current representation of other cities that have differing legislative goals with respect to the proposed 710 freeway expansion, therefore, could not represent our City. Councilmember Del Guercio recommended The Wilson Group. He explained that they well-articulated an understanding of the legislative process, and how best to promote the interests of La Cañada Flintridge. He stated that they have a strong legal background and would be effective in representing the City's interests.

Councilmember Olhasso expressed her excitement with having a lobbyist represent the interests of the City and her interest in having a lobbyist act as a legislative "employee." She expressed her confidence that The Wilson Group was a good choice to address all of the City's legislative needs, even those beyond the 710 Freeway issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Brown expressed concern about having someone on a retainer, and inquired if the City could set up some sort of process in which payments to the lobbyists would result in a monthly report or some type of fixed deliverable to keep the City Council informed of upcoming grants, issues and updates.

Councilmember Olhasso explained that The Wilson Group is hoping to meet with City staff and the City Council to develop a legislative plan which will identify exactly what the City Council's concerns are, what will be expected of the firm and how the City will hold the firm accountable.

Councilmember Del Guercio expressed his support for comments expressed by fellow colleagues. He explained that in order to achieve the desired results, it is going to take a joint effort of the City Council, staff and The Wilson Group. He stated that City Council needs to clearly communicate to The Wilson Group what the deliverables are, what their tasks are, educate The Wilson Group in regards to what the City's needs and expectations are.

Councilmember Spence expressed his pleasure at seeing the City Council hire a lobbyist to represent the interests of La Cañada Flintridge. He provided a brief description of his working relationship with The Wilson Group, and their helpfulness in the past. He expressed his support for the subcommittee's decision and inquired whether the issue of the bond proposals was discussed. In response, Councilmember Olhasso stated that the bond proposal was briefly discussed and all five firms stated that the bond was not going to be "project specific."

Councilmember Del Guercio expressed the importance of bringing all the pieces of information regarding the tunnel project together to create a long term plan and then developing an overall strategy on how to approach the 710 freeway issue.

In response to a question by Councilmember Spence, City Manager Alexander stated that he was impressed with Brooks Ellison and indicated that Mr. Ellison agreed to be our principal contact.

A motion was made by Councilmember Spence, seconded by Councilmember Olhasso, to authorize the City Manager to execute the Legislative Advocate Agreement with The Wilson Group and direct the City Manager to file the required "Lobbying Firm Activity Authorization" (Form 602) with the Secretary of State." The motion carried unanimously.

CONCLUDING BUSINESS

Councilmembers' report on meetings attended at the expense of the local agency

City Attorney Steres opined that City Councilmembers Del Guercio's and Olhasso's report on their recent trip to Sacramento to hire a Sacramento legislative advocate, as presented earlier this evening under agenda item #11, satisfied the AB 1234 requirement.

Councilmember Olhasso presented a report on the National League of Cities Conference she had recently attended in Washington, D.C. She explained that she attended a negotiation skills seminar, met with a Washington D.C. lobbyist, and met with Congressman Dreier and Congressman Schiff regarding funding for the City's soundwall project.

Councilmember Olhasso expressed her thanks to Management Analyst Wilson for her help on getting the soundwall application completed and submitted, which included obtaining a very strong letter from Supervisor Antonovich recommending the City's soundwall project.

Councilmembers' reports regarding regional and local representation

Councilmember Spence stated that he had also attended the National League of Cities Conference. He explained that during a discussion with Congressman Schiff, he presented the possibility of using a USC engineering graduate student to do a project/study on the use of asphalt for the reduction of noise on highways. Congressman Schiff offered his support if it could be put together.

*Councilmembers' requests for future agenda items - **None***

Councilmembers' comments

Mayor Pro Tem Brown stated that the City is making progress in getting pole signs removed from Foothill Boulevard, but expressed concern with the City's Ordinance regarding pole sign removal. He expressed the need to toughen up the ordinance so that when signs are badly damaged they get replaced in conformity with the sign ordinance. In response, City Attorney Steres suggested that the City Council direct staff to bring back an update with the parameters of the current Ordinance.

In response to an inquiry by Councilmember Olhasso, Director Castellanos provided a brief update on the storm damage repairs on Earlmont. He stated that the City has to go through FEMA for this project but, currently, the design of this project is in its final review and approval. He stated that within the next couple of months the City plans to go out to bid. The project should be completed by the end of the year.

In response to an inquiry by Mayor Portantino, Director Castellanos provided an update on the NBSSR. He explained that the City is very close to getting it finalized, but Caltrans is continuing to make changes. He stated that he has voiced concern over continued changes to the Caltrans staff and they have stated that if the City does the additional work requested by Caltrans and returns it to them with their comments addressed, the City would not have to do any more submittals of the NBSSR. They would consider it a completed document and circulate it for Caltrans signatures. Director Castellanos further explained that City staff will be requesting additional funds to cover the requested changes but believes, within the next couple of months, the City should have a completed project. Mayor Portantino requested that Director Castellanos prepare an update and disseminate it to the Soundwall Adhoc committee.

In response to an inquiry by Mayor Portantino, City Attorney Steres provided a procedural update on the cell tower lawsuit. He stated that the City has filed a petition with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals for a re-hearing by either the original, or a larger panel, or to certify it over to the California Supreme Court. He explained that subsequent to the City filing the petition, the 9th Circuit Court requested that Sprint file an answer to the petition filed by the City of La Cañada Flintridge. He stated that the original due date was March 15, but Sprint requested a one week extension, which extended the due date to March 22. City Attorney Steres stated that Sprint will file their answer on Wednesday, it will then be filed with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and the City will wait for their decision. Mayor Portantino requested that a copy of Sprint's answer be distributed to the City Council.

Councilmember Olhasso and Councilmember Spence stated that they had recently attended an update to the Telecommunications Act.

Councilmember Olhasso explained that the attorney for the Minority Council for the House Energy in Commerce Committee and the Washington D.C. Lobbyist for the League of California Cities were in attendance and talked about the need to protect public right-of-way issues, but nothing was mentioned about protecting aesthetics as a public right-of-way issue.

Councilmember Olhasso explained that she and Councilmember Spence discussed the inclusion of aesthetics as a public right-of-way issue with the League of California Cities lobbyist and Minority Council Attorney. Both representatives were supportive of such action and expressed their desire to use the City of La Cañada Flintridge situation as an example. Councilmember Olhasso stated that City Manager Alexander is doing some follow-up with both representatives.

Mayor Portantino stated that May 27-29, 2006 is Fiesta Days in the City of La Cañada Flintridge and invited the community to join in the festivities.

City Manager and/or staff comments - None

City Manager Alexander announced that the Mayor's State of the City presentation will take place on Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at 12:00 p.m. at Kiwanis.

City Manager Alexander announced that the City's mid-year budget review is scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in the City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Portantino adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Kathleen R. Sessman
City Clerk

Minutes Approved by the City Council on May 15, 2006.